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Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

SEP 29 1998

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of

Federal-State Joint Board on  
Universal Service

Forward-Looking Mechanism for  
High Cost Support for Non-Rural  
LECs

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CC Docket No. 96-45

CC Docket No. 97-160

To: The Common Carrier Bureau

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

Puerto Rico Telephone Company ("PRTC"), by its attorneys, hereby requests additional time to respond to the data requests contained in the Bureau's August 7, 1998 order in the above-captioned proceeding. Federal State Joint Board on Universal Service, Order, CC Docket Nos. 96-45 and 97-160, DA 98-1576 (rel. August 7, 1998) ("Bureau Order").

The Bureau Order seeks information to be used in establishing accurate revenue benchmarks to determine the level of high cost support, in the event that the Commission retains the revenue benchmark methodology. Bureau Order at ¶ 2. The Bureau provided six charts for use by designated non-rural LECs to provide the requested data. PRTC has developed procedures and a work plan to collect the data and provide it in the requested format. However, gather of the data was interrupted by Hurricane Georges, which ran the length of Puerto Rico on September 21 (see attachments).

The hurricane left Puerto Rico with heavy material damages and without electricity and potable water, and only recently have some areas of San Juan, where PRTC's headquarters is

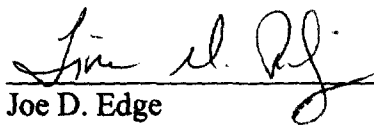
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located, had power gradually restored. Since the hurricane, PRTC's resources have been, and continue to be, dedicated to maintaining phone service on the island, assessing the damage left in the Georges' wake, and working to reestablish normal operations in the company. For these reasons, PRTC is not able to complete its preparation of responses to the data requests by October 6 and respectfully requests an extension of time to respond to the Bureau's pending data request until October 30, 1998.

Respectfully submitted,

PUERTO RICO TELEPHONE COMPANY



Joe D. Edge

Tina M. Pidgeon

DRINKER BIDDLE & REATH LLP

901 Fifteenth Street, NW

Suite 900

Washington, D.C. 20005

(202) 842-8800

Its Attorneys

September 29, 1998


CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Rhonda J. Roberts, certify that true and correct copies of the foregoing Request for Extension of Time of Puerto Rico Telephone Company were delivered by hand delivery, on September 29, 1998, to the following:

James D. Schlichting  
Deputy Chief  
Common Carrier Bureau, Room 518  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Katie King  
Accounting Policy Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, Room 8625  
Federal Communications Commission  
2100 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

ITS  
1231 20<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Room 102  
Washington, D.C. 20037

  
Rhonda J. Roberts

# Hurricane Georges Pummels Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

By SERGE F. KOVALESKI  
Washington Post Foreign Service

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, Sept. 21—Hurricane Georges slammed into Puerto Rico with a vengeance tonight, killing three people in a landslide and leaving a trail of destruction greater than any storm to hit this U.S. territory in decades.

Winds gusted up to 130 mph and drove sheets of rain almost horizontally across the entire island, cutting power to more than 800,000 homes—80 percent of Puerto Rico's electricity customers—ripping down telephone lines and ripping up water mains, knocking out satellite television transmissions and downing thousands of trees.

An ominous roar, accompanied by the piercing whistle of high-velocity winds, could be heard for hours throughout this city, and even large apartment buildings and hotels shook. As midnight approached, Georges' eye hung ominously over the island as anxious residents waited for the trailing wall of the hurricane to strike, a phenomenon that is generally more violent than the storm's initial blows.

Late tonight, President Clinton declared Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands a disaster area, authorizing release of federal recovery aid. Earlier in the day, Georges' 115 mph sustained winds and blankets of rain battered the U.S. and British Virgin Islands to the east after flooding roads, toppling power lines and shearing off rooftops on the tiny



BY BRAD WYE—THE WASHINGTON POST

islands of the northeastern Caribbean.

At least one death was reported on the island of Antigua—that of a man who was struck by flying debris when he ran outside as the tempest raged early this morning. Residents of the island, where nearly 6,000 people were holed up in shelters, said that homes and buildings were pelted by driving rain, flying sheet metal and coconuts. Soldiers patrolled the streets of St. John's, Antigua's capital, to prevent looting.

In the twin-island state of St. Kitts



Canadian tourists in San Juan, Puerto Rico, shield their faces from high winds as Georges approaches the island.

BY MARLA LAWRENCE—ASSOCIATED PRESS

and Nevis, residents ventured out briefly to survey storm damage and check on neighbors when Georges' 35-mile-wide eye passed overhead before dawn, bringing with it a welcome yet ephemeral calm. The hurricane then roared back to life as its rear flank came ashore.

Somewhat diminished in strength since the weekend but still awesome in its destructive power, the hurricane gained more might today as it took aim at Puerto Rico, where nearly 22,000 people sought refuge in

376 shelters set up in schools, churches and other public buildings.

By midafternoon, St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands had been pounded by 100 mph winds that caused widespread property damage. The islands' governor, Roy Schneider, imposed an 8 p.m. curfew, and the giant Amerada Hess Corp. oil refinery in St. Croix, the largest in the Western Hemisphere, shut down as a precaution.

"St. Croix took a direct hit," said Michael Formosa, a meteorologist at the National Hurricane Center in

Miami, in a telephone interview. Puerto Rico, Antigua and the Dutch territories of Saba and St. Eustatius also felt the brunt of Georges' fury.

Here in Puerto Rico, officials said that three people died in a storm-induced landslide in the San Juan suburb of Bayamon, and that two elderly people had died of heart attacks in shelters. Moreover, they said that roofs on at least 10 structures had collapsed and that people may be trapped in the rubble.

San Juan's airport reportedly suffered heavy damage as did the is-

land's flagship hotel, the Conquistador, in the town of Fajardo, where 60 homes were wrecked. Georges was believed to be the largest and most powerful hurricane to hit this island of 3.8 million people since Hurricane San Felipe struck in 1928 and San Ciprian in 1932.

A hurricane warning has been posted farther west for the Dominican Republic and the northern coast of Haiti, the southeastern Bahamas, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and eastern Cuba. Meanwhile, officials in Key West, Florida's southernmost city, began making emergency storm preparations.

Some who came face-to-face with Georges in Antigua and neighboring Montserrat last night and early today said it was awesome but far less destructive than other hurricanes they have experienced. "The damage from Georges is trivial if we compare it to hurricanes Hugo, Lewis and Marilyn," said Teresa Silcott, co-owner of the Grandview Bed and Breakfast on Montserrat.

The hurricane cut water and power service, washed out roads, felled trees and damaged houses there, but it could have been worse, she said. "We have been praising the Lord all day," she said, adding, "I think people were really prepared because Hugo was so fresh in our minds." But in St. Kitts, taxi driver Carl Simpson, 52, had a different take on Georges. "It will take a while to recover from this," he said. "Whether it is shooting winds of 150 mph or 100 mph, a hurricane on a small place like this is a terrifying thing."

# Hurricane Hammers Puerto Rico

## Hispaniola, Florida Keys Batten Down as Georges Moves West

By SERGE F. KOVALESKI  
Washington Post Foreign Service

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, Sept. 22—It was this morning, under a light rain, that the wrath of Hurricane Georges finally broke Carmen Rios Serrano.

After a terrifying night in which Georges wreaked havoc on Puerto Rico, Serrano, 61, painfully confronted reality as she assessed the damage to her small apartment in the Los Pinos section of San Juan: Its tin roof had been peeled off like

the top of a can, ankle-deep rainwater covered every inch of the floor, and there was no electricity, telephone service or tap water.

"What am I going to do? I am a woman living alone with little money," said Rios, who receives a monthly government assistance check. Then she buried her face in her palms and wept. "What happened to me last night was so horrible. I feel crazy and helpless."

As dawn arrived, most of Puerto Rico was without power, and its 3.8 million residents faced the aftermath

of the most destructive hurricane to hit this U.S. territory in decades—a grim spectacle that also confronts the U.S. and British Virgin Islands and the tiny states of the northeastern Caribbean, which also fell victim to Georges' punishing power over the past two days.

By all accounts, the devastating force that Georges unleashed during its six-hour assault on Puerto Rico was greater than that of Hurricane Hugo, which caused billions of dol-

lars in damage throughout the Caribbean nine years ago and killed more than two dozen people. And, like Hugo, the powerful storm could strike the U.S. mainland in the next several days, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

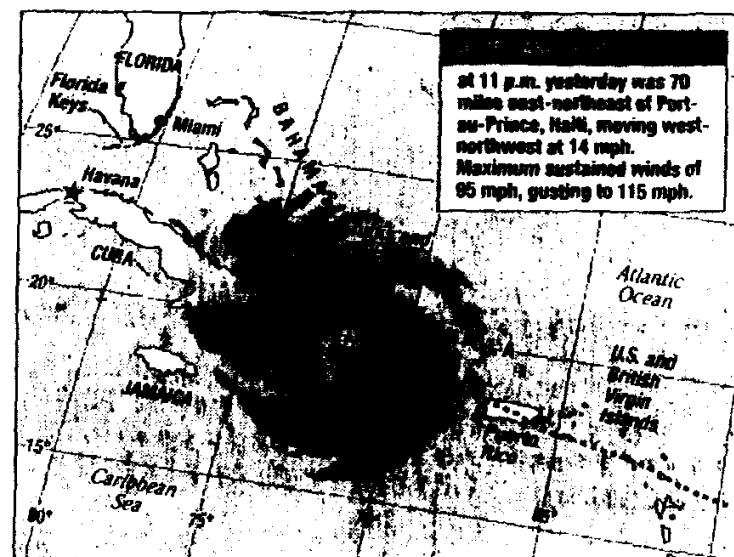
After battering Puerto Rico with cyclonic winds of up to 130 mph, Georges churned westward and made landfall this afternoon in the Dominican Republic, where it caused power outages, pounded coastal structures with towering waves and forced thousands of the country's 8 million people into storm shelters. At least 10 people were reportedly killed—two electrocuted by downed power lines, the rest either drowned in flash floods or buried beneath mudslides. Overall, Georges has killed at least 20 people since it tore into the northeastern Caribbean late Sunday.

The storm caught the 3 million people of Santo Domingo, the Dominican capital, almost entirely unprepared as it swerved slightly south of its predicted course and began lashing the city as fiercely as it had San Juan. As the darkness approached, Dominican President Leonel Fernandez told his countrymen the country's fate is in God's hands. "For the moment," he said, "the only thing left for us to do is to raise our prayers to the Almighty."

Late last night, the eye of the storm crossed into neighboring Haiti—which shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic—and forecasters said it would likely blanket that country as it did Puerto Rico, although with slightly diminished winds. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and the vast majority of its 15 million people live in substandard housing and have little communication with the outside world.

All day today, emergency teams there scrambled to prepare for the storm, particularly in Haiti's remote, deforested hills, where thousands of people live in tin shacks. "In a storm of this magnitude, it is hard to even comprehend how catastrophic this could be," said a government spokeswoman in Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital.

See HURRICANE, A20, Col. 2



HURRICANE, From A1

For those islands already ravaged by the storm, the job of digging out will be a formidable one. In Puerto Rico, Georges snapped and uprooted countless trees, which are now blocking many of the island's major streets. Cars were flipped over, windows were blown out, and hundreds of homes and businesses were destroyed or damaged. In one incident, a construction crane toppled over and slammed into the living room of a woman, who somehow escaped injury.

By the time the hurricane traversed the island, at least five people had been reported killed; numerous others are believed to be missing in the rubble of their collapsed homes. Electricity was knocked out over virtually all of Puerto Rico, and it may take as long as three weeks to restore service, posing potentially serious consequences for businesses and medical facilities; for now, hospitals are

using gas-powered generators.

Only 20 percent of the population now has access to potable tap water, and there are no indications when full service will return to normal. On another front, officials said that many coffee and plantain crops, which are vital to the island's agricultural economy, were destroyed by the hurricane.

"We are starting from ground zero," Puerto Rican Gov. Pedro Rossello said of the recovery effort. As winds and rains slowly abated today, workers cleared debris from the runways at San Juan's international airport so that emergency aid could be flown in.